

LABOUR MONTHLY

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CHALLENGE TO THE LEFT

Quaestor

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Notes of the Month

CHALLENGE TO THE LEFT

Quaestor

Mr. Wilson has made rapid progress in the last two months. To denounce the seamen's strike as directed against the State and the community: to reaffirm support of America's war in Vietnam: to insist on a Prices and Incomes Bill now specifically excluding profits, and only wagging a reproving finger at dividends declared without seven days' notice to the Incomes Board, but inflicting draconic penalties on workers striking—or advising strikes—within four months of tabling a wage claim: to introduce savage credit restrictions which once again cut the people's purchasing power in the interests of sterling: and—a last-minute device—to fly to Moscow in the guise of a peace-promoter, knowing full well that he is regarded there as a war-promoter—who would have thought that the pace would be quite so rapid? Pace along what road? The Tory road, of course. 'Strike against the State' was Lloyd George's charge against the railwaymen in 1919 and Winston Churchill's charge against the General Strike in 1926. Harold Macmillan and Douglas-Home used the same terms as Wilson in supporting United States aggression in Vietnam. Defence of profits and the demand for wage restraint and unemployment were the essence of the Budget proposals put forward by the Confederation of British Industry—the employers' organisation and the real power behind the Tory Party—last February. 'Stop-Go' by the Tories, in defence of the parity of sterling and at the expense of the people, was regularly denounced by the Labour Party leaders when in opposition. Even the creation of a diversion by the device of an empty gesture to Moscow was used by Eden in 1955 and Macmillan in 1959. In fact, the gap between the leaders of Wilson's government and the Tories is narrowing. By the same token, the gap between Harold Wilson and the 13 million working people who voted for him last March is widening.

Promises and Fulfilment

This would be obvious even from a simple comparison with the election pledges given four months ago. Of course, in keeping with

the parliamentary traditions hallowed by Gladstone and Disraeli, and briskly set down by Bagehot in his *English Constitution* a hundred years ago, 'an Opposition on coming into power is often like a speculative merchant whose bills become due. Ministers have to make good their promises, and they find a difficulty in so doing'. And in spite of Bagehot having written in times when a Labour Party was not even thought of except with extreme fear and trembling ('a political combination of the lower classes, as such and for their own objects, is an evil of the first magnitude', he said), the Labour Party's pledges in March, 1966, were also drafted in the most cautious and most indiarubber terms, capable of being bent either way, as required. All the same, there was a pledge, several times repeated, of which the general drift ran: 'The needs of the lower-paid worker will not be ignored . . . Male workers in some occupations continue to be underpaid . . . We must move towards greater fairness in the rewards for work', and so on. What a mockery these words proved to be when Britain's obviously underpaid seamen found Wilson lined up with the employers against them! The election manifesto spoke of 'developments in the warning system' for which TUC approval had previously been secured—but it took good care to say nothing about the system of penalties for trade unionists now announced. It talked of making sure that the incomes policy 'is not only fair but seen to be fair'. One could hardly expect it to explain that the workers' wages in a capitalist country are by nature unfair, since they leave in capitalist pockets the surplus value created by the workers' labour; but it kept silent about the privileged position for profits and dividends maintained in George Brown's Bill—until the election was safely past. The manifesto denounced 'the disastrous cycle of Stop Go', which the Labour Government was 'determined not to repeat', and promised that 'the longer term reconstruction of Britain' which it would begin would ensure that there was no return. That was the promise: the reality has been the Selective Employment Tax which is bound to increase unemployment, the Bill for a £150 million Industrial Reorganisation Corporation to finance the expansion of capitalist monopolies, and finally, on July 15, the rise in the Bank Rate to 7 per cent, the further heavy reduction in liquidity, in fact what *The Times* that day called justly 'one of the tightest post-war credit squeezes'. Again, the manifesto repeated the old lie that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam is responsible for the continuation of the war, because it will not negotiate with the invader occupying its national soil, guaranteed

by the 1954 Geneva agreements (notice how all the pro-American statements in Parliament invariably slip over the period from 1954 to 1956, when the Americans were step by step breaking the agreements and making a lie of their solemn pledges). But the manifesto did assert that the USA were ready to negotiate on lines 'which would ensure that the whole country would become neutral, without foreign troops or bases'. President Johnson thereupon made perfectly clear that that is precisely what he is *not* prepared to concede, and that the ever-increasing flow of U.S. troops and the ferocious bombings are designed to maintain the American grip on South Vietnam under all circumstances. Yet Wilson again and again reaffirms his support for the Americans.

'Who Excuses Himself, Accuses Himself'

The old French saying has never been better illustrated than by the pretexts given for all this turncoat policy on behalf of the Government. Of these, the most typical and surely the most revealing has been George Brown's defence at Peterlee on July 15: 'We have unhappily never come to power except when there were great problems, great difficulties and great troubles'. How remarkable! And at what other time did he expect a Labour Government to come to power, in the oldest country of capitalism in the world, with the most experienced ruling class? What a fund of philistine complacency it takes not to understand that the labour movement itself came into existence, two centuries and more ago, and the workers returned the Labour Party to power in 1966, just because of the problems, difficulties and troubles created by capitalism—which they have always expected their representatives to begin solving for them in an anti-capitalist way. The capitalists would not be in existence if they did not continually make things unpleasant for the workers, to the extent that the latter allow them. That is the very reason why British workers began forming trade unions illegally in the early 18th century, set about vigorously expanding them when they won legality in 1824, and formed a Labour Party on the basis of the trade unions seventy-five years later. It was why Socialism began to be preached in 1884 by the Social-Democratic Federation, and why the Labour Party in 1918 adopted a programme declaring for Socialism—'the common ownership of the means of production and distribution'—and promising 'generally to promote the political, social and economic *emancipation* of the people, and more particularly of those who depend directly upon their own

exertions by hand or by brain for the means of life'. The whole point is, what are George Brown and his friends doing about these declared aims of their party? The answer is that they are dealing with the problems, difficulties and troubles as a Tory Government would, in the interests of the capitalists, the enemies of common ownership and of the emancipation of the people, economic and otherwise.

Blatchford and the 59

It is seventy-five years since Robert Blatchford—an outstanding Socialist propagandist, for all his shortcomings, who was a pupil of William Morris as Morris had been a pupil of Marx and Engels—gave these difficulties and troubles as the very reason why Socialism was needed in Britain. 'Why nationalise the land and instruments of production? To save waste; to save panics; to avert trade depressions, famines, strikes, and congestion of industrial centres; and to prevent greedy and unscrupulous sharpers from enriching themselves at the expense of the national health and prosperity' (*Merrie England*, chapter XIII). And George Brown should know that Blatchford, like the other Socialists, did not suggest doing this by co-operating with the capitalists in a 'mixed economy'. No, he said this required taking away from the rich and putting under the control of the State, as 'the common property of the people, used and governed by the people for the people', not only the mines and railways, but also the land, ships, harbours, docks, canals, factories, machinery and money, i.e. banking. If Blatchford's list of the evils of capitalism sounds strangely reminiscent of the troubles and difficulties of today, it is because we still have the capitalists with us in Britain. Hear the echo of Robert Blatchford in the motion introduced, after Frank Cousins' resignation, by 59 Labour MPs on July 13. After calling for the rejection of the penal legislation against the trade unions, improvement of the wages of lower-paid workers, a productivity drive based on higher wages, dividend and price controls, it went on to demand

the introduction of a system of strict import controls, a strengthening of controls over overseas capital investment, a drastic reduction of defence expenditure, in particular of British commitments east of Suez, and the extension of public ownership in the basic industries.

Not yet Socialism, of course, but a blow at the other side in the struggle of classes, a move towards solving the difficulties and

problems for the first time at the expense of the capitalists—which would be a stride towards Socialism.

Signs of Revolt

The peculiarities of House of Commons procedure prevented discussion or voting on the motion. But its real importance was that it spoke the mind of the mass of politically conscious workers. Union conference after union conference, in recent months, has made this certain, attacking the penal legislation root and branch. The Mineworkers, the Transport Workers, the Graphical Trades, the Boilermakers, the Public Employees and a number of smaller unions had already, by mid-July, piled up some three million TUC votes against it. Similarly representative, far beyond the measure of their numbers, were the 32 Labour MPs who abstained on July 7 from voting on a Government motion endorsing support of the American war. The debate itself was an unprecedented triumph for their demand that the Government must not use the antiquated Standing Order No. 9 to prevent an urgent discussion of foreign policy: keeping up the pressure day after day in a manner that held up other business, they forced the Government to climb down. But their real strength was that they were speaking the mind of many unions, large and small: of many trades councils and local Labour Parties: above all of innumerable meetings and demonstrations up and down the country, which have been condemning support of the criminal American aggression. For it has long become obvious to the rank and file that, as K. Zilliacus, MP, wrote in *Tribune* on July 16: 'The Vietnam war is poisoning international relations, and making it impossible to end the cold war and the arms race in Europe. That means our defence expenditure and commitments remaining at a level which will make it impossible to plug the balance-of-payments gap, underpin the pound solidly and get us out of pawn to foreign bankers. All this adds up to the progressive failure of Labour's economic policies and to death by a thousand cuts for the Welfare State. In short, the Government's support of the Vietnam war is treason to the United Nations Charter, dishonours our signature to the 1954 Geneva Agreement, condones barbarism and brute force, digs the grave of the Labour Government and knocks nails into the coffin of peace'.

Carmarthen

At this point there comes another sign of revolt in a different form. In the by-election at Carmarthen caused by the death of Lady

Megan Lloyd George, Labour Party supporters on July 14 voted with their feet. The Liberals lost over 3,300 votes and the Tories over 2,300, out of the nearly 12,000 and the 5,300 they respectively got at the General Election. But the Labour Party, far from benefiting thereby, also lost nearly 7,500 of its 21,200 votes last March, while the successful Welsh Nationalist increased his vote from just over 7,400 to just over 16,000. The electorate was numerically much the same as four months before, but less than 75 per cent voted as against 82.6 per cent in March. Moreover, this was a constituency which had given Labour mounting majorities of 3,000 in 1957 at a by-election, 3,600 in 1959, 6,300 in 1964 and 9,200 in March 1966. Nor had Plaid Cymru, the Nationalists, had an unbroken series of advances. The lesson is plain. The Labour Government's policy has alienated a mass of its previous voters, to the point at which they stayed at home or looked out for someone else who was neither Liberal nor Tory. Of course, there are not Welsh Nationalist organisations in many constituencies, even in Wales: but other competitors for disappointed Labour voters may be found, and they may not all be Socialists. The open side of the Labour Government's anti-Socialism, expressed in such ways as Harold Wilson's notorious red-herring about 'tightly-knit groups' during the seamen's strike, his Government's discrimination against the *Morning Star* in its advertising and the brazen bias of the BBC, may be adequate assistance for the enemies of the working class, even if they don't save Harold Wilson's bacon.

Oliver Asks For More

For none of all this is enough for the capitalists. On the contrary, the more they see the Wilson Government widening the gap between itself and the working class, the more they demand. The Government 'must resort to both an incomes freeze and a sharper increase in unemployment', was the *Economist's* comment on the new measures of financial squeeze (July 16). Negotiating procedures in which trade unions can base their claims on social justice to push up the lowest rates are 'the very type of economic habit that Britain needs to change', it wrote in another editorial. *The Times* snarled: 'Britain's economic malaise is not going to be cured until everyone of us is being made aware of the true position: that we have been living beyond our means for too long: until every consumer begins to feel the pinch'. And who is every consumer? *The Times* obligingly spelled it out. 'He is unlikely to feel the pinch so long as there are

many more jobs than men to fill them; so long as a striking seaman has no difficulty in finding profitable (*sic!*) employment in any number of jobs; so long as there is over-full employment'. In short, make the workers responsible for the sterling crisis, and take it out of them. This from a newspaper which on other pages reports Distillers pre-tax profits at £41.5 millions; Woolworths profits 'pushed down' from £15.4 millions in the first half-year of 1965 to . . . £15 millions this year; Tunnel Portland Cement profits 'virtually unaltered' at £1,629,000, but a dividend of 20 per cent against 19 $\frac{1}{6}$ per cent a year ago; and so on. The next day *The Times* insisted that 'only ostensibly is it a financial problem; in reality it is a social problem'—going on to castigate unions in many industries where 'any change leads to a demand for immediate extra money'. For form's sake it also chided managements: plenty of them have been 'hidebound and unenterprising: even more, perhaps, just timid'. No question of too much money there—and how could there be, with Smith's Crisps (on another page) showing a final dividend of 'only' 15 per cent, Thorn Electric 30 per cent, Allied Breweries 15 per cent, Initial Services (the office equipment people) 20 per cent, the Royal Bank of Scotland 19 per cent, and so on? A social problem indeed! Yet by July 16 the newspapers were reporting still more pressure on sterling, further heavy falls on the Stock Exchange, speculation about devaluation of the pound, rumours of dissension in the Government over further 'stern' measures—against the workers. The vision of another 1931, with Harold Wilson and other leading figures emulating Ramsay Macdonald in the 'national' interest, was clearly rising before the excited vision of the Tory propagandists. Such is the gloomy reward for rendering them loyal service. Nor should the possible cuts in overseas expenditure, of which there was talk as Wilson took off for Moscow, be thought any departure in that respect: for the Tories themselves were accepting it at last as inevitable.

It Has Happened Before

There have been precedents for the Nemesis that follows Labour Governments' display of their concern for the opinions and interests of monopoly capital. The first Labour Government, after eight months of such abandonment in 1924, was defeated in the general election after its leader Macdonald had sponsored the forged 'Zinoviev Letter', artfully slipped before him by Tory financial speculators inside and outside the Foreign Office. Five years of

Tory rule followed. The second Labour Government, after two years (1929-1931), was broken up by the same gifted leader and his associates, deserting to the Tories under the impact of an engineered financial crisis. Fourteen years of Tory rule followed—including the second world war. The third Labour Government of 1945, turning sour on its many promises in the course of the first two years of office, held on for another four, losing heavily at a general election in 1950 and decisively at the next, in 1951. Thirteen years of Tory rule followed. And throughout, over forty years, the foundations of monopoly capitalism in Britain have remained untouched, contrary to what is laid down in the Labour Party's programme. Throughout, every manifestation of concern for the interests of capital has only produced the harsh demand for more—whether it was Philip Snowden assuring the monopolists that a Labour Government would be 'less of a class Government than any government of the past' (1923), or Herbert Morrison telling them that the second Labour Government looked on the employer 'as a man and a brother' (1930), or Hugh Gaitskell, in the midst of the post-war Tory reaction, explaining that 'the social barriers have crumbled' (1956), or the 'co-operative planning' by the present Labour Government, the nationalised industries and the privately owned industry (80 per cent of the total) offered by George Brown's 'National Plan' (1965). Yet every Labour Party conference for years past has found on its agenda resolutions showing that thousands of rank and file Labour Party men and women want to see the primary aim of Socialism—expropriation of the capitalists in the interests of society, not co-operation with them—put into effect. And the same issue is raised today by the struggle against the barbarous war on the Vietnamese people, for peace and disarmament in Europe, against the incomes policy and its penal legislation.

Why Does It Happen At All?

Here, too, a word from another Socialist pioneer is in season. It was written by William Morris for the special May-Day number of the Social-Democrats' weekly, *Justice*, in 1895, at the very end of his life—and less than five years before the TUC decided on the formation of a Labour Party. His article was entitled *Improvement of Condition—or Change of Position?* Morris wrote: 'If I were a non-Socialist, and were interested in the preservation of the society of privilege, I would conceive a hope from the present situation of the possibility of hoodwinking the working men into accepting what

I should name (to them) a kind of semi-, or demi-semi-Socialism, which would do no sort of harm to the society of privilege. I should condescend to Socialism, and pat it on the back. I should say, as indeed I have heard such worthies say, "Socialism, my friends, cannot give you what it promises, but I am pleased to see you Socialists, because all this labour agitation will call people's attention to the 'condition of the working classes' and will 'improve it'. You will find that you must work *with* the capitalists and not *against* them, so that you may extend markets, contend successfully with other nations, and improve business. By that means, though this Socialist agitation is founded on principles which are wrong, and cannot be carried out in practice, yet it will have given you enhanced wages, reduction of the hours of labour, more permanency of employment, better housing, gas and water galore, and an extended franchise. And then (but I don't know when) you will be happy and contented, and, which is more to the point, so shall we". That, I say, will be the sort of line to take for those who wish to keep labour—i.e. usefulness—out of its heritage. And I think it will be taken, I fear not wholly unsuccessfully. For the present necessities of working people are so great that they must take what they can get . . . they can scarcely, the average of them, turn their hopes to a future which they may never see. And yet if that future is not to be indefinitely postponed, they must repudiate this demi-semi-Socialism. They must say: "£2 a week instead of £1; eight hours' work instead of nine, ten, twelve; out-of-door relief galore to supplement the out-of-work periods; comfortable (Lord help us) lodgings found by the municipality—all these are fine things indeed. But we will not even think of them unless we can use them for getting all the benefits which we *know* can follow on the abolition of privilege and the realisation of equality". It is clear that there are plenty of capitalists who have individually and collectively, through their parties, been saying to the British workers for years what William Morris anticipated (not to Indian or African or Arab or West Indian workers, of course), and that a large number of Labour leaders and would-be leaders have listened to them and passed the message on, suitably disguised. But does the increased number of concessions wrung from the capitalists by the workers' struggle, since Morris wrote, alter the truth of his words in their essence?

Challenge To The Left

This is the real challenge to the Left in the trade unions, the Labour Party and the co-operative movement. Unity, through

Harold Wilson, with big business and thus with American imperialist aggression, not forgetting the European bankers and the forces they control: which means unity for the maintenance of capitalism and constantly recurring 'difficulties'—or unity for Socialism: which today means a common effort to impose a programme of preservation and improvement of the workers' living standards, restriction of big business and a resolute policy of its expropriation in the basic industries, a complete break with the warmongering policies of the USA and a search for peace in co-operation with the Socialist countries. No word-play or double-meaning formulas can conceal the need for such a choice. Harold Wilson, George Brown, the bankers and the Tory Party are seeing to that. And unity on the Left ought to be real unity for the struggle, such as that, for instance, achieved by the ten national youth organisations on Vietnam. It should be an alliance of hearts, that rules out the kind of petty pin-pricking of Communists that some would fain practise still as a kind of 'compensation' for their criticism of right-wing pandering to the capitalists, or as a kind of 'lightning-conductor' supposedly shielding them from attacks by Transport House (an illusion if ever there was one). The campaign for such unity, and for its programme of action worked out together, is at once the noblest and the most practical activity that all who stand for peace and Socialism could undertake today.

July 18, 1966.

BRITISH MINERS IN CONFERENCE

Mick McGahey *

THE twenty-second Annual Conference of the National Union of Mineworkers, held this year in Scarborough from July 4-7, was to have been graced by the presence of the Prime Minister, but unfortunately he was unable to attend, being too busy with the affairs of State. This was indeed a great pity as he could have learned something of the concern and anger which is rife today within the mining communities at the policy the Labour Government is pursuing in relation to the Fuel and Power industries of this country. He might even have discovered how trade unions decide policy and

* Mr. McGahey is Vice-President of the Scottish Miners.

how ludicrous his charge was against the seamen, who, like other sections of the movement, have a policy conference which lays down the guiding lines for their Executive.

The dominant feature of mining today is the feeling of frustration and the lack of confidence existing in the future of the industry and this was shown in the opening sentence of the Presidential Address delivered by Mr. S. Ford, in which he spoke of 'heavy clouds of uncertainty hanging over what for years has been regarded as this nation's basic industry'. Yes, heavy clouds indeed, arising from the failure of the Wilson government to implement its pledges to the industry and the nation. The crisis of confidence, expressing itself in the mass drift from the industry of 40,000 men per year, springs directly from the closure policy of the Government and the failure of the National Coal Board to pay reasonable rewards in terms of wages and fringe benefits to keep men in what is still the most arduous and dangerous industry in this country. With this crisis in mind and with an intimate knowledge of its effects, delegates debated the motion on the *Concentration of the Industry*, which stated:

This conference demands that colliery closures should be phased with the provision of suitable alternative employment. It stresses the importance of adequate provision for older and disabled workmen and that alternative employment shall be within reasonable travelling distance. Furthermore it emphasises that the financial burden of phased closures should be borne by the Government and not by the National Coal Board.

In this discussion delegates trounced the present policy of the government which indiscriminately throws aged and disabled miners on to the streets and compels thousands more to extend their working day through long travelling to alternative jobs. The theory that you can uproot mining communities by mass transfer from the declining areas to other coalfields was shown as a failure and that such a policy could only intensify the problem of maintaining men in the industry. The continuation of this policy will spell disaster for mining and it will be the British people who will have to pay a heavy price.

As Ford put it:

Can we as a nation afford to turn our backs on coal for, what I believe to be, some doubtful short-term advantage?

He then went on to show that even if the most optimistic forecasts were realised, the discovery in the North Sea of new sources of natural gas would only account for no more than five or six per cent of this country's energy requirements over the next decade. The

issue, of course, is what is to be the future for mining, and here more requires to be done to popularise the 12-point programme of the union.

Some of the main points of the programme are:

- (a) The government should underwrite the industry at its present level.
- (b) Interest payment on the Board's remaining capital liabilities should be suspended.
- (c) The government should assume the total social cost of concentration, thereby relieving the Coal Board of finding £50 million over the next five years.
- (d) Government and local authorities should extend their preference for solid fuel.
- (e) Nationalisation of solid fuel distribution should be extended, with government assistance if necessary.
- (f) The government should introduce a general research programme for the energy sector in which it should itself participate and provide funds. Priority should be given to investigation into the fullest economic utilisation of the nation's coal resources.
- (g) It should be established as a principle that oil and natural gas from the North Sea will replace imported fuels and not other indigenous supplies of fuel.

The acceptance of this basic programme of demands could help to restore confidence in the industry's future and create the climate conducive to the recruitment of youth and the maintaining of a balanced manpower. The present policy is one to sell out to the oil monopolies who having obtained a sizeable share of the fuel market will push up the price of imported fuels; it was the present policy that Conference decisively rejected.

One of the highlights of the conference was the debate on the Prices and Incomes Policy. The press had been raging over the resignation of Mr. Cousins from the Government; the President had pronounced himself in definite support of Government policy; the fraternal delegate of the TUC, Mr. Len Sharp, spent a considerable part of his speech defending the policy; and all this in an effort to influence the debate, but to no avail. The protagonists of legislation were slapped down, the delegates refused to follow the wrong leaders and voted for the reasonable case put against legislation by Bill Lamb of the Scottish Craftsmen by 243,000 to 241,000 ensuring that the total vote of the NUM at this year's TUC and Labour Party conferences will be cast against legislation, which, as the resolution said, 'will make compulsory the early warning system and vetting of all wage claims'. This was an important step forward in the struggle against measures designed to shackle the

unions and prevent them from fulfilling their function. The miners are opposed to legislation enforcing the incomes policy and for this Scarborough will be remembered.

The alternative to the incomes policy and the threat of legislation is to press forward now with the demand on wages and this year again conference gave its marching orders to the leadership to 'seek a substantial increase in all day wage rates' and in the discussion the delegates struck a critical note on the delay of nearly a year in reaching the last meagre settlement. The miners' conference is one in which the boss himself comes along and gives his annual pep talk and this noble Lord Robens once more lived up to his reputation for oratorical skill, painting a glowing picture of the future but as usual unable to provide the real answer to the industry's problem. The answer can only come from the progressive forces in Britain.

The miners' feelings regarding the horrible and tortuous suffering of the people of Vietnam at the hands of the Americans was given expression in a composite resolution which

deplored the extension of bombing raids in Vietnam; called upon the British Government to continue its efforts with all governments to stop the fighting in Vietnam, as a prerequisite to a negotiated settlement which would be expected to provide for the withdrawal of all foreign troops in accordance with the Geneva Agreements of 1954 and enable the peoples of North and South Vietnam to determine their own future.

Like all composite motions, this one was not to the satisfaction of all delegates, but despite its failure to call on the British Government to dissociate itself from American policy in Vietnam, the mover of the motion, Lawrence Daly, indicted the Americans for their brutal military invasion in Vietnam. The advocates of blind loyalty attempted to whitewash the role of the British Government with anti-Soviet jibes, only to be routed in an admirable reply by Daly who spoke for all who sincerely desire an end to this brutal war.

What then are the lessons of this twenty-second conference of the British Miners? They are demanding a new policy in regard to the Coal Industry; for increased wages and better fringe benefits; against legislations which would cripple the unions; for peace in Vietnam and a democratic Rhodesia. An undoubted move to the left on the part of this important union and, given the necessary unity of the left progressive forces within the mining industry, it can be an important step forward for all who are seeking a real socialist answer to Britain's problems.

CORRECTION: On line 9, p. 306 of July issue, for '£128 million' read '£43 million'.

NEW SITUATION IN KENYA

Idris Cox

KENYA is in for a new stage of sharp struggles. This became clear following the 'little general election', the results of which were announced at the end of June. Contests took place for 20 seats in the House of Representatives (the Lower House), and for 10 seats in the Senate (Upper House).

The governing party, the Kenya African National Union (KANU) won 21 seats—13 in the Lower House and 8 in the Upper House—and the new political party, the Kenya People's Union (KPU) won 9 seats—7 in the Lower House and 2 in the Upper House. The results have been acclaimed a 'great victory' for KANU (which is led by President Kenyatta and Tom Mboya), and a serious defeat for KPU, the Opposition (led by Oginga Odinga, former Vice-President of the Kenya Republic, and former vice-chairman of KANU).

If this is a great victory for KANU, it is an extremely shallow one. The seats gained bear no relation to the votes won by the two parties.

In his post-election statement, KPU President, Mr. Odinga, said the results had not surprised his party:

The two-month-old KPU has polled a total of 78,287 votes as against KANU's 57,816 votes in the Senate seats. The two-month KPU has polled a total of 86,334 votes as against KANU's 72,584 votes for the Lower House seats . . . it is therefore evident from the total results that the majority of the voters in the by-election favour KPU as opposed to KANU. In the Senate a majority of 20,471 votes were cast for KPU over KANU; while in the Lower House a majority of 13,750 votes were cast for KPU over KANU. It is only an idiot or a mad dog that can claim that KANU as a party is more popular than KPU.

If the KANU leaders were genuine in their claim that they were letting the Kenya electors decide the issue, there would have been no other course than for them to admit defeat. Instead Mboya fatuously remarked after the results were announced: 'The KPU is dead. The voters buried it today'.

There is not the slightest prospect of this happening. The KANU leaders are not concerned with consulting the masses, but with forcing through a reactionary policy of co-operation with foreign imperialism, for which they are highly praised by spokesmen of imperialism in the United States, in Britain and in West Germany. This was the real issue of the 'little general election'. To combat the growing mass support for the progressive policy of the KPU, the

KANU leaders imposed all kinds of restrictions against the opposition party—restrictions even more vicious than those applied against the Communists in capitalist countries. Although no Communist Party exists in Kenya, and none of the KPU leaders are Communists, this did not prevent Kenyatta and Mboya from engaging in a vicious campaign of distortion in which they described their KPU opponents as ‘Communist plotters’ and ‘agents of foreign powers’, simply because they had opposed KANU’s tie-up with foreign imperialism and had instead urged for closer co-operation with the socialist countries.

During the election campaign KANU used the government’s apparatus for its propaganda against the KPU. While KANU had full use of the radio, KPU was completely banned from using it. The registration of KPU as a new political party was deliberately delayed until a few minutes before closing time for nominations. Just before the election took place a Preventive Detention Act was rushed through, which was aimed at intimidating anyone who dared to support KPU. The government threatened chiefs and civil servants supporting KPU; imposed bans on KPU meetings; banned many KPU election meetings, and arrested some of the KPU candidates before polling day. Hooligans were encouraged to attack KPU meetings, and accusations were made that the government had printed many duplicate voting papers.

In the midst of the campaign came the government’s decision to postpone the counting of the votes for a fortnight. The elections for the Lower House were held on June 12, and for the Upper House on June 26. Using this as a pretext, in the first round of elections the ballot boxes were held in government custody for two weeks, and the counting of the votes delayed until June 27. In the face of all these conditions, what is most surprising is that KPU was able to poll many more votes than KANU. If KPU had been allowed the most elementary democratic rights in the election campaign, it seems clear its total vote would have been even higher, and possibly more seats might have been won.

In the election campaign KPU concentrated on presenting a progressive alternative to the reactionary aspects of KANU’s policy. KPU condemned the restriction of democratic rights, the seizure of passports, the bans on meetings, etc., and demanded the practical application of all democratic rights guaranteed in the existing constitution. KPU attacked the blatant device of using the phrase ‘African Socialism’ by KANU, as a screen to hide a policy which in

practice had nothing in common with socialist ideas. The results of this policy were shown in the increasing grip of foreign capital on Kenya's economy, in the growing numbers of landless and unemployed, in the growth of a capitalist economy, and in the ever-growing gap between rich and poor.

KPU pointed out in relation to the land problem that only an eighth of the 8 million acres of European land had been taken over, and that more than half of this had been bought by Europeans—after lavish compensation of £25 million had already been paid to the former European settlers. Exorbitant prices were charged to Africans buying portions of land previously owned by Europeans, and most of them are now saddled with enormous debts. KPU's programme urged the distribution of *free* land to squatters and poor farmers, the taking over of more European land on the basis of encouraging co-operative farms, and the limitation of all holdings to prevent a new class of big landlords.

The programme reminded KANU of its own admission that in Kenya today there were fewer people in jobs than there were in 1960, and that over the past six years thousands of school-leavers had been unable to find employment. It also drew attention to the widespread corruption in the civil service; to the appointment in high positions on the basis of political subservience to KANU; to the higher fees now being charged for primary education, and to the fabulous sums being paid to higher civil servants at the expense of those in lower positions, who were doing the real work.

Despite the worsening economic situation Tom Mboya from time to time still releases a number of 'sunshine' stories about future prospects. His most recent effort was on June 13, when he forecast a rise of 8 per cent in the gross national product during 1966, and a large rise in the capital formation in Kenya. What he did not reveal was that the bulk of the expected 'capital formation' would come from foreign investment. In 1965 there were no less than 67 big British monopoly firms investing in Kenya, apart from those of the United States and West Germany. The British monopolies have world-wide interests, and their total share and loan capital and reserves amount to over £6,000 million.

Concerning the proportion of British investments in East Africa as a whole, the *Financial Times* of June 12, 1965, gave the estimate of the Overseas Development Institute in Britain, which was that an annual profit of 20 per cent was expected on a three-year matured investment. When it comes to those employed in private industry,

there is quite a different story. Early in June this year the Minister for Commerce and Industry gave an account of wages and salaries in Government and private employment. The average wage for 4,700 in Government employment was £1,532 per annum; for 8,000 Asians it was £737, and for 160,000 Africans it was only £165. In the private sector the individual average annual wage for 10,000 Europeans was £1,500; for 28,000 Asians it was £518, and for 165,000 Africans it was only £127. Even this low African average annual wage conceals the high figure for a tiny minority, for it was admitted that 99 per cent of African workers in the private sector got less than £120 a year. Despite this, Tom Mboya still urges an expansion of the private sector, which he complained was lagging behind Government investment. Not a word was said about the starvation level of wages in the private sector, or of the growing mass unemployment.

It is not surprising therefore that KPU is winning increasing support. True, this support does not yet present a serious challenge to the Government. The votes cast in the 'little general election' came mainly from the Luo region of Nyanza; and bearing in mind that Oginga Odinga himself is a Luo, it can be expected that the KPU's main stronghold would be in Nyanza. However, KPU also won two seats in the Wakamba tribal areas of Machakos and Kitui, and though Tom Mboya described these as 'freak results', in reality they reveal that dissatisfaction with KANU's policy was not confined only to the Luo people. And though Odinga's opponent was Walter Odede (Tom Mboya's father-in-law, both of whom are Luos), Odinga's vote was ten times greater than Odede's, and Odede lost his deposit.

Government spokesmen are now spreading the idea that they cannot recognise the KPU as the official opposition in the House of Representatives because it only has nine members. This is indeed a strange doctrine, since it was KANU who forced the 'little general election', and the results reveal that KPU's vote was greater than that of all the KANU candidates.

This result is even more impressive than it appears on the surface, for KPU's main leaders (apart from Jomo Kenyatta) were precisely those who built up KANU as a decisive force until it became the only recognised political party within a one-party system. These outstanding leaders are Oginga Odinga, Achieng Oneko (arrested along with Kenyatta in 1953) and Bildad Kaggia, who was kept in detention along with Kenyatta for several years.

Most of the people now grouped around Kenyatta constitute the

'band-waggoners', who played little or no part in the struggle for Kenya's liberation. When the real crisis comes in Kenya, these people are just as likely to change over to the other side, as did many of those people whom Dr. Nkrumah had trusted in Ghana.

Whether or not KPU becomes recognised as the 'official Opposition', it has already laid the basis for a growing mass movement which can stimulate the struggle for the basic aims of Kenya's liberation, for which so many sacrifices have been made.

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

W. H. Smart *

IF the programme of the Labour Government for strengthening the British economy and advancing the living standards of the people is to be successful, then a completely different attitude must be adopted by the Government towards the role of the construction industry in the economic and social life of the country.

This industry holds the key to our advance, as it is geared to the production of factories, commercial offices, docks, bridges, roads, houses, schools, etc. Without an effective construction industry our overall plans can be held up. Already the value of investment in the industry has risen from £2,000 million in 1960 to £4,000 million and it is estimated that in the next 3-4 years this will reach the figure of £6,000 million. Given a correct Government approach towards financing its schemes and for dealing with the cost of land, all of which are essential if cheaper costs of construction are to be realised, this would leave only the physical question of the efficiency of the industry to be dealt with as the organisational means of carrying through the programme.

The building unions have pioneered since the end of the first world war for some form of State control of the industry. This has been done by the policy of direct labour building by Local and County Municipal Councils and nationally through the Ministry of Public Works and Building. In 1950, at its conference in Ayr, the National Federation of Building Trades Operatives formulated its policy for the public ownership of the industry. It basically

* Mr. Smart is a member of the Executive Council of the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers.

outlined the need for nationalisation of the land and for taking over both the construction and materials industries. It dealt with the important question of compensation to avoid the difficulties experienced by those industries after 1945. Proposals were advanced for control which included the establishing of a National Building Corporation, a Finance and Programming Council consisting of all interests in the industry.

Since 1950 repeated efforts have been made by the unions, particularly my own, to secure the approval of the TUC and the Labour Party for public ownership, but apart from some concessions by the TUC Economic Committee no real advance has been made and this reveals the failure of such responsible bodies to understand the vital tasks and functions this industry has to perform in the interests of the nation.

What is the situation in the industry? The growth in capital investment necessarily increases the volume of activity, therefore the question of planning and securing the maximum utilisation of manpower and materials becomes decisive. Whilst in the past the industry has been inefficient due to casualisation, lack of stability in contracting and organisation of materials supply, today there is sheer anarchy.

Outside of direct labour employment which approximately employs around 170,000 operatives, the industry is in the hands of private enterprise consisting of around 100,000 firms. Only a small proportion of the large-scale firms are capable of organising between 1-5,000 men, another 30-40 thousand firms from 1-500 men and the remainder are only capable of organising between 1-19 men. In addition, in the drive to secure profit and corner the manpower, many firms, and this includes the largest contractors, have encouraged the method of labour only subcontracting and engagement of self-employed men. A recent estimate of the Industrial Training Board for the industry reveals to date about 50,000 of these Labour Only Subcontractors. All of this indicates, irrespective of the effects this has on the worker's condition of employment, the uneconomic character of the organisation of the industry as a whole. This has now led to my union demanding a Public Enquiry into the running of the industry, a proposal which recently secured the approval of all unions in the NFBTO.

What has to be understood is that here is an industry with gigantic responsibilities consisting of 1,600,000 men, to which can be added another 2 million involved in materials and supply, which cannot

fulfil the Government's programmes on this basis and is ripe for public ownership. Can public ownership be successful? We believe it can, given the right direction. Already evidence exists to prove this, as outlined in a survey conducted by my union in 1954, and issued in book form, on 'Building by Direct Labour'. For the first time in the history of Britain a questionnaire was sent to over 6,200 Local Authorities asking for factual information on Direct Labour Building. The replies were amazing. Nine hundred Local Authorities replied and of these 622 indicated they operated Direct Labour Departments on either maintenance or capital works or both. Of utmost importance is that in reply to our question whether their experiences showed favourable or unsatisfactory operation, the comments showed no adverse results and that at least they were capable of working at equal cost with private enterprise.

Press publicity has already revealed to the public that Direct Labour Departments covering thousands of men employed by such as the Greater London Council, Sheffield, Glasgow, etc., have accomplished great tasks of construction and at a saving to the Councils. Given public ownership in which Direct Labour Departments have a key part to play, the present uneconomic units can be replaced by larger and more efficient ones.

In the present political situation public ownership of the construction and materials industries must be regarded as an immediate and not a long-term necessity. The need to harness all our resources which includes not only traditional building but in the fields of system building and new techniques, cannot be allowed to dribble along the path pursued by the industry for over 100 years. It should be the responsibility of all sections of the labour and trade union movements, the trade union branches, Trades Councils, Labour Parties and tenants' organisations, to popularise and bring pressure to bear for the public ownership of this industry.

CLAUDE BERRIDGE

We pay tribute to a valued contributor and friend, Claude Berridge, who died at the age of 65 on July 8. Claude Berridge was for many years a divisional organiser in the A.E.U. and a member of the Executive Council from 1956 until his death on the eve of his retirement. He first wrote for *Labour Monthly* in 1933, and it is interesting to note, in the light of his special connections with Fords, that the article was entitled 'The Ford Strikers Win a Victory'.

IN THE EYES OF THE HUË, SAIGON AND DA NANG PEOPLE



'The current Saigon puppets Thieu and Ky sustained by dollars'.

YIDDISH CULTURE IN WEST AND EAST

Judah Waten*

OFTEN when anti-Soviet propagandists assert that today Yiddish culture is in a serious plight in the Soviet Union and that soon the Soviet Jews will be without a literature and language, they appear to try to leave the impression that conversely in the West, the Yiddish language and literature are flourishing. Actually the reverse is true. Yiddish literature is at a very low ebb in the USA and is virtually extinct in Britain, but in the Soviet Union there is still considerable creative activity in the Yiddish language. According to the 1959 Soviet census returns 470,000 out of the 2,700,000 Jews declared their mother tongue to be Yiddish, probably a higher percentage than in any other country in the world, including the USA which has the world's largest Jewish population, over 5,500,000.

Yiddish, a younger language than Hebrew which goes back to antiquity, was derived from Middle High German between the 10th and 12th centuries and after the Jewish migration eastward to Poland and Russia was mostly spoken in Eastern Europe where it was enriched by new words and word formations. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries when millions of Eastern European Jews migrated to the USA, Britain, and almost every other country in the world where civic and educational equality existed, Yiddish continued to be spoken by the migrants but declined as their children acquired the new languages and became integrated into the life of the new countries. In none of the countries of migration has Yiddish blossomed forth into works of prose, poetry and drama to the extent that it did in Russia and still does.

It is not surprising of course, for modern Yiddish literature was born in the mid-19th century in Tsarist Russia in which lived nearly 50 per cent of the total Jewish population of the world at that time. Yiddish cultural expression grew up in the Pale or Settlement, that vast Ghetto set up in 1835 by Nicholas I, in parts of Byelosussia and the Ukraine, in which most of the Jews were compelled to live. The majority of Jews engaged in petty commercial pursuits and lived in indescribable poverty. They had their own distinctive language,

* Judah Waten, Australian novelist, author of prize-winning *Distant Land*, wrote *Going Back to Odessa* in *Labour Monthly*, September 1965.

Yiddish; their own costumes, customs and religion; were denied entry into Russian schools and universities, and had even fewer political rights than the non-Jewish inhabitants who had precious few themselves. They could not leave the Pale except for the discharge of business. Only the few wealthy could avail themselves of that privilege and in fact by 1859 the richest Jewish merchants were permitted to reside in all cities of Russia.

The first important Jewish writer, Mendele Mocher Sforim (Mendele the bookseller), began to write in Yiddish in 1863 after he had visited many communities in the Pale. He depicted the horrors and miseries of ghetto life and championed the ordinary people as did the other two celebrated Yiddish writers who appeared soon after him, I. L. Peretz and Sholem Aleichem. These three writers constitute the classical trio of Yiddish prose. Perhaps the greatest of all Yiddish writers and certainly the most widely translated and best known is Sholem Aleichem (1850-1916), a rare humorist with a matchless style. His work represents an almost complete repertory of all the sufferings and humiliations, the economic hardships and the religious and political intolerance which, without respite, the Jews had to endure in the Tsarist Empire between the years 1880 and 1915.

Outside of the Tsarist Empire in Europe where the bourgeois revolutions (first in 17th-century England and later in France in 1789) gradually brought the Jews civil and political emancipation, Yiddish died out, particularly after the French revolutionary armies battered down the old ghetto walls in Germany. The new era of educational equality emerged both steadily and sporadically (some German states now and again re-introduced disabilities) and the 19th century saw the appearance of Jewish writers in the language of their countries, like Heinrich Heine in German and Benjamin Disraeli in English.

The Russian Jews did not acquire full civic, political and educational equality until the establishment of the Soviet Union, although the Pale had been abolished by the March revolution in 1917. Prior to that time, from the 80s with the incessant pogroms which cost thousands of Jewish lives, went a tightening of the Pale, a further limiting of education in the Russian schools to which an increasing number of Jews aspired despite their love of Yiddish.

Between 1881-1914 no fewer than 2,000,000 Jews from Tsarist Russia left their homes, the largest number going to the USA where there was an acute labour famine. By 1915 over 1,500,000 Jews in Russia

were living on charity parcels sent by Jewish philanthropic organisations in the USA and Britain. During that whole period more and more Jews began to participate in the Russian socialist and labour movements as distinct from the separate Jewish labour organisations. This was partly the result of the spreading of Marxist ideas in the ghettos of the cities of the Pale and in Poland by Jewish intellectuals fortunate enough to receive education in Russian schools and universities. There was also a growing understanding that emancipation could not come about by the efforts of the Jews alone, but only in co-operation with Russian democratic, labour and socialist movements. The words of the famous German-Jewish writer Ludwig Boerne, the contemporary of Marx and Heine, were widely quoted:

He who wants to work on behalf of the Jews, must fuse their cause with the demands for universal freedom.

From the 80s Jewish socialists began to make an outstanding contribution to the Russian socialist movement and they were among the founders of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. The attempt to separate off Jewish socialists and the Jewish working-class movement in a separate compartment from the general Socialist movement, was the policy of the Jewish Bund, against which Lenin waged battle.

This conflict, as indeed the whole question of integration or assimilation which as a rule was accepted and encouraged by the European socialist movement, was increasingly discussed in the Yiddish press that arose in Odessa and Warsaw. Even then Russian culture was beginning to exercise a profound influence on Jewish intellectuals and workers, largely because of the universal character of the ideas that animated it, the ideas of writers like Tolstoy, Plekhanov and Lenin. At the turn of the 20th century significant numbers of Jews were turning to the Russian language and Jews began to enter Russian culture and literature. However, Yiddish remained the language of the Jewish masses, and in all the towns and villages of the Pale and in Poland there was some Yiddish cultural activity, theatres, readings and publications, often bound up with the Jewish labour movement.

In the 80s and 90s in Britain the Russian-Polish immigration initiated new trends within the Jewish community which led to the formation of the working class movement among the Jews. In 1884, a year before William Morris launched his socialist paper, *The Commonweal*, the migrant Morris Winchevsky began to publish in

London the first Yiddish socialist paper in the world which was also the first Yiddish paper in England.

In less than 25 years the Yiddish labour and general press declined as Jewish Labour gradually became part of the general labour movement, for it was largely the migrants that had supported the Yiddish press. The need for separate organisations diminished with the drying up of immigration and the growing up of an English-born generation going through the council schools and many of them battling their way to higher education.

As though symbolising the rapid change, Morris Winchevsky emigrated to America where he became the bard of the Jewish workers in the New York sweat shops. Living to a great old age, he took part in the foundation of the American Communist Party, and in 1927 visited the Soviet Union where he was received by President Kalinin and honoured in the same way as Eugene Pottier, the author of the 'International'.

Nothing of the Yiddish press which continued in an enfeebled form until the end of the second world war remains today. Nor did Britain produce one Yiddish writer of note, probably not one British-born Yiddish writer, although many Russian Yiddish writers including Sholem Aleichem wrote about the Jews in Britain. Except as a private family language, generally imperfectly spoken, Yiddish has disappeared from the Anglo-Jewish world. The London Jewish Quarterly in its summer issue 1964, commenting on the visit to London of the Polish State Jewish Theatre, asked:

How many of those who were clamouring for the revival of Yiddish in the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries went to see the Polish State Jewish Theatre on its recent visit to London for a four weeks season of Yiddish plays? Judging by the attendance figures, not very many. Was it, perhaps, because they were not really concerned?

And in truth they are not, except for a handful of devotees, and even anti-Soviet propagandists, who although allegedly disturbed by the fate of Yiddish literature in the Soviet Union, would never dream of writing their own books in Yiddish even if they could. Jewish life in England has gradually found expression in an expanding Anglo-Jewish literature precisely because English has become the only language of the English Jews.

In the first thirty years of this century there were two distinguished Anglo-Jewish writers, Israel Zangwill and Louis Golding. Since 1945 there has been a veritable wave of Anglo-Jewish writers. Some of the best known are Arnold Wesker, Alexander Baron, Gerda

Charles, Frederic Raphael, Wolf Mankowitz and Harold Pinter, all of whom have been understood and accepted by the non-Jewish public as well as the Jews, a significant fact which underlines the break-up of Jewish separatism in England.

An even greater outburst of Jewish literary creativity in English has taken place in the USA in the last 40-odd years. There were first the New York East End novelists and in the 30s Clifford Odets, Nathaniel West, Myer Levin and Michael Gold, famous for his 'Jews Without Money'. Since the second world war their numbers have increased. These include Irwin Shaw, Arthur Miller, Saul Bellow, Norman Mailer, Joseph Heller, Bernard Malamud and J. D. Salinger who have all drawn from Jewish life as well as from the general American scene.

But during the same time the American Jewish community, which has been the world's largest since 1918, has not produced a Yiddish writer of stature, although many Yiddish writers like Sholem Aleichem emigrated to New York. American propagandists however do not hesitate to lay claim to the famous Yiddish writers, I. J. Singer, J. Opatashu, Sholem Asch and Z. Schneour because they lived in the USA, although all of them were born in Poland or Russia and were mature writers when they emigrated to the USA.

Yiddish literature and culture have catastrophically declined in the USA in the face of the integration of the American-born Jews and powerful Americanisation campaigns. In an article in *Time* on December 28, 1962, dealing with the anti-Communist *Jewish Daily Forward*, one of the few Yiddish Dailies remaining in the USA, it said:

The children of *Forward* readers do not read the paper, because they cannot. As the second generation sons and daughters of Jewish immigrants, they have forgotten the mother tongue, that backward running curious cross of Hebrew and medieval German. Like Yiddish itself, the *Forward* is an anachronism, born in a departed past to meet a need that no longer exists.

The well-known Yiddish authority David Flakser writing about Yiddish in the USA on the occasion of the 2nd World Congress for Yiddish culture held in New York, which has the largest concentration of Jews in the world, said:

During the ten years between the Congresses the number of Yiddish-speaking and Yiddish-reading Jews had decreased greatly. . . . Hardest hit has been the Yiddish book. The number of readers has declined steadily. Yiddish books are now read by Yiddish writers and the narrowing strata of the Yiddish intelligentsia. Talented Yiddish poets and novelists and essayists are forced to publish and distribute their books at their own expense.

The Yiddish theatre in the USA is even more moribund than Yiddish literature. There is not one permanent Yiddish theatre in New York. In the London *Jewish Chronicle* on July 14, 1961, the American-Jewish actress Stella Adler, the daughter of the late Jacob Adler, one of the greatest figures in the history of the Yiddish theatre, said: 'The Yiddish theatre is dead. Part of it died with my parents. Maurice Schwartz tried to keep something of it alive, but it could not be done. The pressures of American life, the commercialism, the things people search for. It isn't a world in which arts can thrive.'

(In this article, Judah Waten has shown the historical background of Yiddish culture and its present-day decline in the West. Next month we shall be publishing a second article by the same author, showing the survival of Yiddish culture in Poland and the Soviet Union.)

ROGER CASEMENT

Gerald Hamilton

(August this year will see the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Roger Casement, the Irish patriot who was executed by the enemies of Ireland for 'treason' against the British Empire. We are pleased to publish this memoir by an Irishman who was his friend. It is all the more timely because the political descendants of Casement's hangmen have recently been showing their true face in Ulster—Ed., LM)

IT was on August 3, 1916, that Roger Casement was executed at Pentonville Prison. He was executed as 'a traitor', although, as I have very often pointed out before, history teaches us that 'a traitor' may well be a patriot who has failed, just as 'a patriot' may also be a traitor who has succeeded. Indeed, history is sprinkled with examples, and if Casement is a good example of the former, surely John Churchill, afterwards the first Duke of Marlborough, is an illustration of the latter.

I do not suppose that anybody has been more wrongfully executed than was Roger Casement. He came to Ireland in the famous German submarine to try to put off the 1916 Rising, since the German promises of military support were not forthcoming, and all that could be sent was a shipload of arms, which reached Tralee in Kerry on the 'Aud', a ship commanded by Captain Spindler. Captain Spindler (whom I was able to meet in Berlin after the first world

war) confirmed this, and it was Casement's intention to do what he could to prevent the Rising taking place.

When it is realised how much good Roger Casement did in the Congo and Peru, the thousands of human lives he saved and the misery he helped to relieve, one can regard him as a martyr. English people never seem to understand, even today, that an Irishman is not an Englishman, and Casement attempted to strike a blow for the independence of his country, which, if it brought him to an English scaffold, brought him also into the heart of every true Irishman.

My recollection of Casement is that he was very simple politically; he never realised that his famous report about the Congo atrocities was utilised by the British Government, not because the latter cared one way or another about the fate of the wretched black population, exploited to get rubber, but because they wanted to discredit the Belgian Government, who had, in the words of Casement's great friend, E. D. Morel, author of *Red Rubber*, 'got there first'.

I first met Roger Casement at the house of Mrs. Alice Green (a woman devotedly dedicated to the cause of Irish Nationalism), in London about 1912, when Casement had not long been back from Putumayo, and his report on the atrocities there was still a subject of conversation in London, where he was considered to be a great hero. It was at this time that Casement talked of his hopes for Irish independence. It is interesting to remember now that he was always against John Redmond and the latter's idea of Home Rule. Casement wished for a complete severance of political ties between the two countries, but on an amicable, economic and reasonable basis.

Casement was indeed something of a prophet, because, unlike most people in the year 1913, he considered war with Germany to be inevitable, and it was then he decided that Ireland's interests would be best advanced by an alliance with Germany. He went straight to New York and immediately got in touch with the very influential Irish groups in that city, and he wrote to me, even suggesting I should join him there. However, when war broke out I had decided to go to Spain, a country I have always loved and which I knew would remain neutral.

Later Casement decided to take the risk of going to Germany and he sailed from New York on the Norwegian ship Oskar II. This ship was duly intercepted by HMS Hibernia, but Casement

was not recognised, nor was he looked for. Indeed most of the passengers, who were mainly Germans, thought this mysterious 'Mr. Landy' was a British spy.

It will be remembered that in Oslo (then Christiania) the British Ambassador there tried by various means to have Casement kidnapped or assassinated. However, Casement reached Berlin in safety. As it was, I was destined never to see Casement again, nor was I allowed to leave England until after the war when I had been released from internment.

Worthier pens than mine, such as those of René MacColl and Montgomery Hyde, have described the trial and conviction of Roger Casement. In spite of the fact that Benedict XV, King Alfonso of Spain, and President Wilson were ready to beg King George to commute Casement's sentence to one of life imprisonment, the foolish Government, and Sir Basil Thomson, the Commissioner of Police, determined that Casement should hang. They therefore published the famous *Black Diaries*, photostat copies of which were circulated to the Governments of those interested in Casement being spared. Were these Diaries genuine or not? This fact has never been decided clearly, but whether they were genuine or not, they had no bearing whatever on Casement's political activities. My own opinion is that it is quite possible that parts of the published diaries were interpolated by the British, because we may all remember that when the alleged diaries of Grivas were found behind a bush on a mountain in Cyprus, during what I may call 'the troubles' in Cyprus, hardly anybody could be persuaded to believe in their authenticity; it was quite unlikely that such a clever guerilla leader as was General Grivas would have left a compromising diary, written not even in code, but in ordinary Greek, behind a bush for British soldiers to find so easily.

It must never be forgotten that it was not Casement and the Irish Nationalists who first committed what the English call treason, but the Ulster leaders, such as Carson and F. E. Smith, who organised the gun-running for their armed forces, and who clearly defied the British Government by saying that if the Home Rule Bill was passed, they would resist its implementation by force of arms. In parenthesis it may well be asked: What on earth had F. E. Smith to do with Irish matters, since he was not an Irishman? But, at that time, he had made a name for himself by fishing in troubled waters wherever he had an opportunity to do so. Carson, on the other hand, was at least a Dublin-born man and therefore an Irishman

having the right to say his say. It must also be remembered that at the Casement trial, F. E. Smith who, by that time, had become Attorney-General and Lord Birkenhead was the most ferocious enemy of the Irishman in the dock.

This year, as I had never seen the ceremony of 'Trooping the Colour', I watched it on television out of curiosity. I was amused to see the Queen of England leading her guards back to her palace to the strains of the splendid music of 'The Wearing of the Green', as I remembered the words of this inspiring march—one of the lines runs 'The red on England's cruel flag is the blood of Irishmen'.

It is strange to think that before half-a-century had elapsed after Casement's death, his remains were accorded a State Funeral and the British Ambassador to the Irish Republic stood to attention before the bier. Casement, who had been a Protestant, registered at Pentonville Prison as a Roman Catholic, in order to be near Irish fellow-countrymen and a Catholic priest. His conversion to the Roman Catholic Church followed, and he received his first Communion according to the rites of that Church on the day of his execution. The Prison Chaplain who accompanied him to the scaffold (Father Thomas Carey) was approached, after the execution, by an Irish lady, who wished to assure him that she would pray for Roger Casement. The Chaplain said to her, briefly, 'Madam, do not pray for him, pray to him, for he is surely now in Paradise'.

LABOUR MONTHLY

FORTY YEARS AGO

When the General Strike took place . . . the General Council went through the strike with only one idea, i.e., that the Government was impregnable, that nothing that the working class could do would shake its determination and therefore that the strike ought to be called off at the first opportunity. It has been freely said by its apologists since that no strike can possibly succeed which is directed against the Government. This is an idea which is hopelessly defeatist. All great struggles in our basic industries must under present conditions bring in the Government . . . In modern industry, any effective struggle of the working class to preserve their standards must come up against the Capitalist State, which is not representative of the community, but is simply the principal employing-class weapon in the struggle against the workers' standards . . . The greatest lesson of the General Strike, therefore, is the need for a new leadership, who will study the complex problems arising out of the situation of British Capitalism, who will face temporary unpopularity and abuse in order to equip the British labour movement to face the changed situation and who in every struggle will go out to win, knowing no loyalty except loyalty to the working-class movement.

(From 'Were the Miners Let Down?' by J. R. Campbell, *Labour Monthly*, August, 1926.)

UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF ELEANOR MARX TO F. ENGELS

(The letter published below is the second of two letters first printed in the German Democratic Republic and now printed for the first time in English. The first of these letters was published last month in Labour Monthly. It described Eleanor Marx's journey to and participation in the Congresses of the French Socialists at Lille and of the German Social-Democrats at Halle.—Ed., LM)

*Hotel Goldne Kugel Halle a. S. den
F. W. Fischmann 16 Oct., 1890*

My dear General,

The actual details of the Congress no doubt you see in the daily reports of the Volksblatt. Everything seems to be going very well indeed. I am bound to say, however, that the more I see of the people the more I see what a very strong current of philistinism there is. No doubt it is easy to understand how and why this is, but it is a blessing for the Party that behind these men are the mass of the people to keep them up to the mark. The so-called opposition from the Werner clique certainly seems quite done—and Bebel and all to whom I speak say the same. But where I think our people are making a mistake is in not sufficiently realising the danger of Vollmar. He is certainly no remarkable intellect or anything of that sort, but he is a very clever intriguer, in my opinion a thousand times more really dangerous to the movement than a dozen Werners. As to Bebel, it is clear to me both from what has been said publicly and from what I hear privately, that the Party owes everything—so far of course, as it does not owe it to the strong good sense of the people—to him and to his really incredible work. I don't think even you, General, know *what* this man has done and is doing. Practically everything is left on his shoulders. As you know, there are two Commissions, one (apart from purely business ones) busy working at the amended Organ-

isation plans, and the other enquiring into the Werner accusations. Bamberger (Edé's¹ brother-in-law) was the chief witness, and tells me privately that the Commission is all right, and that Werner will be quite done for.

The programme is adopted with almost no changes at present, but with the understanding that an 'Entwurf'² will be drawn up, discussed everywhere and decided upon at the next Congress. Liebknecht was the 'Berichterstatter'³ on the Programme, and talked an awful lot of nonsense—with some excellent passages and very effective. We were to have had the International Conference last night, but as Singer, Auer⁴ and Bebel were on two Committees, it was impossible, and now an arrangement is made which I think quite wrong, but there is such a pressure of work, and so little time, I could do nothing to prevent it. Adler agrees with me, but also sees no help for it. This is the present arrangement. At 9 tonight the whole Fraktion—or as many of them as are here—give a 'banquet' to all of us foreigners, and after it we are to consider the question of the Congress and so forth. I think this a pity, d'autant plus, that I find Liebknecht has also asked Duc Quercy (reporting here for the *Temps*). Now

¹ 'Edé' was Eduard Bernstein, editor of the German SDP weekly, *Sozialdemokrat*.

² Draft.

³ Reporter, opener.

⁴ German Social-Democratic leader.

Duc I know is intimate with Guesde and on good terms with our Party in France, but I did *not* think he was really *in* the Party, and if we are to discuss Party matters I don't see why we should have such a person as Duc Quercy in it. Then too—unless I can induce Bebel to ask him on the ground that he is here from *London*—Fischer can under the present arrangement, not be present—a decided loss. The difficulty, of course, is that I hardly see Bebel, who is hard at work all day, and that very naturally all of these men are worried about their own home affairs, and are hardly in the humour to realise the importance of external questions.

Yesterday I had long and very interesting talks with several people—especially with Adler. Like Bebel he also feels that it is a blessing for the movement that, for a time at any rate, the movement can be carried on openly and that more pressure can be brought to bear on the Reichstag members—many of whom, according to Bebel, are nothing more nor less than small middle-class men, and are, in a sense, almost a danger.

Tonight the Organisation Committee finishes its work, and therefore all the most important questions will be settled tomorrow, although the Congress will sit *at least* till Sunday, and possibly longer. But as I said, all the really big questions will probably be settled tomorrow and Saturday. I am glad of this as my return ticket to Cöln must be used on Saturday. My leaving before the actual end, however, will not matter, as we have the International Conference tonight, and after tomorrow morning Bebel will be comparatively free, he tells me, to talk to me. Of course everybody is asking me everywhere, especially the Berliners,

but as my ticket is only good for 6 days I must refuse. In a way I am glad. Here I have seen all the friends (I would only have liked to see Uncle Edgar—tho' I don't know how I should have found him, and Friede Bebel⁵) and if I went to one at Berlin I should offend another, and so it's much simpler not to go at all. Besides I hope by this to escape my Frenchmen, who did not take return tickets. The one journey was enough. I shall have much to tell you when I get back. Fancy that three big Paris papers are represented by three men who neither understand nor read one solitary word of German! You should see these people at table! First one gets really angry, but at last Adler and I nearly got fits of laughter last night. For *at least* $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour they discussed what they should eat; then they nearly cried because they didn't get all they wanted; all the time they discussed food and their digestions; in fact Longuet isn't in it with Guesde and Duc Quercy.

Goodbye, dear General. I shall see you soon. Lots of messages from all and sundry.

Love to Nymmy⁶

Your Tussy.

Among the telegrams and greetings received today is one from London from the Salvation Army!! Did I tell you how funny it is—to me, anyhow—to see the Police Commissary on the Platform, and the two official short-hand writers?

⁵ Bebel's daughter.

⁶ Helene Demuth (1823-1890), house-keeper and closest friend of the Marx family.

AMONGST THOSE PRESENT . . .

Angela Tuckett

AMONGST those present at the Chatham Restaurant, London, on June 30, 1966, when readers, contributors and staff celebrated the 45th Birthday of a unique journal there was an astonishing variety of people. I tried to imagine whether an occasion under any other auspices, anywhere, could have brought together, at that time, quite the same richness, and in such a cheerful, confident unity of diversity; maybe it exists, but I couldn't think of one.

In age and experience the revolutionary Socialist heritage of the nineteenth century touched hands with the youngest recruits to today's battle for peace and national liberation. There stood a veteran Scot in his 90th year—already famous as a Socialist propagandist before he joined the British Communist Party when it was founded in 1920. Beside him a sixteen-year-old school girl, already an old campaigner in peace marches and demonstrations, taking an evening's rest from swotting for the O-level, first obstacle in the examination rat-race to further education. From the House of Commons down the road—it was the day of the unprecedented scenes of revolt against the war in Vietnam—Members of Parliament flashed in and out again like dragonflies, back to their duties. First reader to arrive was a joiner who had spent all his active life in the movement in the Barrow-in-Furness shipyards; he brought with him memories and historic documents of the struggles from the 'twenties. Shortly afterwards in came a clergyman who in 1906 had joined the Social Democratic Federation and the company of 'Red' Christian Socialists with links right back into the Socialist revival of the 'eighties. There stands the busy convener of a Scottish shipyard; a distinguished philosopher; an artist; a pioneer of the suffrage movement; a leading Fleet Street columnist; a dramatist; a Welsh miner; a pioneer organiser of women working in the furnishing trades in London; the author of a famous book on prison reform; a teacher; a mass of general secretaries, and presidents, past and present, of trade unions, with other officers attending in double capacity—as delegates from their organisations and in their personal capacity as lifelong readers. And, of course, readers from overseas—Cyprus, India, the West Indies, Africa. Indeed, I felt myself that amongst those present most certainly in thought one ought not to exclude many thousands all over the world, from the greatly respected friend in Japan, contributor to our first volume, to the lifelong campaigner

for peace in the United States who will celebrate her 100th birthday this autumn; friends in every continent, never forgetting some who have spent many years in the gaols of Portugal and South Africa. No one could forget, even in the cheerful Birthday atmosphere, that the breath of life to the magazine has always been struggle. There on a dozen screens against the wall was a view as from Mount Sinai of the events which formed the background of former significant anniversaries of the fighting magazine: the General Strike and the imprisonment of our co-editors in 1926, the fifth anniversary; the Spanish War and the fascist offensive in 1936, our fifteenth anniversary; the Korean War and the publication in our thirtieth year of the famous Pritt pamphlets; and on to the fortieth, which saw the first manned flight in space and the RPD pamphlet 'Storming Heaven' in 1961. What a reminder of the rich variety of events and people! Take the birthday cake, cut with a flourish by the—literally—one-and-only editor, R. Palme Dutt, who was celebrating both his own 70th birthday and the 45th year of his editorship; it had been made by a reader whose whole life is part and parcel of the struggle of the Durham miners—as daughter, wife and mother.

The Master of Ceremonies, Robin Page Arnot, Marxist historian and co-founder and Associate Editor of *Labour Monthly* recalled the magazine's early life. He related, too, anecdotes told him by Bernard Shaw, Sidney and Beatrice Webb and other fabulous monsters like Applegarth with such histrionic bravura that once again he fostered the illusion that he himself must have been an eye-witness, and a crony of Eleanor Marx, William Morris, Frederick Engels, August Bebel. Then he called first to the platform world famous defender, D. N. Pritt, QC, who spoke with characteristic sincerity and modesty of the friendliness and help of those with whom he had associated since becoming a constant contributor to *LM*. David Burke, General Secretary of the Tobacco Workers' Union, protesting that he was only deputising for the General Secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers, Will Paynter, and George Elvin, General Secretary of the Cine-Technicians who were both called away on trade union business, gave a glimpse of the esteem in which leading trade unionists hold *LM*. He was followed by the youthful and spritely University lecturer, Dipak Nandy. And that left the 'Prince of Denmark', the 'Hamlet' of the occasion, R. Palme Dutt to make a reply worthy of the occasion and fully in its spirit—cheerful, optimistic, with all the youthful zest to which a lifetime of revolutionary teaching and learning entitles a man.

GREETINGS

From Fraternal Journals

(Readers will have seen the many greetings we received on the occasion of our 45th Anniversary from friends at home and abroad in our June and July issues. We now have pleasure in publishing the remaining greetings from fraternal journals all over the world, other than the USA and USSR which were printed last month.)

AUSTRALIA

The Tribune:

On behalf of *Tribune* we send greetings to R. Palme Dutt and *Labour Monthly* on the occasion of this notable double anniversary. In this part of the globe, far removed from the chief centres of proletarian struggle, information and guidance on the main trends in politics and economics have always been of vital importance and not always easy to obtain. There have been times in the stormy past when *Labour Monthly* has been the main source of such information to many of our comrades and right up to today it holds the same high place in our esteem. Nor do we forget Palme Dutt's important writings apart from *Labour Monthly*. His book *Fascism and Social Revolution* (1934) still holds its position as the best available on the rise of fascism in Europe, and only last year we welcomed what we feel will be accepted as another classic, his history of *The International*. We wish long life and good health to R. Palme Dutt and a still bigger circulation and expanding influence for the *Labour Monthly*. — A. Robertson.

AUSTRIA

Weg und Ziel:

We gladly take the opportunity of conveying our warmest good wishes and greetings on the occasion of the

45th Birthday of *Labour Monthly* and the 70th Birthday of Palme Dutt. These two birthday children cannot be separated from each other. They are bound up with the best traditions of the British labour movement and its bravest hopes. They embody the truest spirit of proletarian internationalism whose meaning and necessity is more important than ever in these difficult times.—*Franz Marek*.

BULGARIA

Rabotnitsesko Delo:

It is a pleasure for the editorial board of *Rabotnitsesko Delo*, organ of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, to extend heartfelt good wishes to *Labour Monthly*. To Palme Dutt, the unrelentless fighter for socialism, and to *Labour Monthly* we wish further successes in the struggle for improving the welfare of the British working people, for peace and understanding among the peoples and for uniting the international Communist and workers' movement.—*G. Bokov*.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Mezinárodní Politika:

Let me express the most cordial congratulations on behalf of the staff of *Mezinárodní Politika*. For the past ten years during which we have been publishing our journal, *Labour Monthly* has been a reliable source of thought

and knowledge most useful to our own work. Thank you and—good luck!
—*Editorial Board.*

CUBA

Granma:

On behalf of all of us who are working in this collective, we wish to send to you and to all the comrades who help in the publication of *Labour Monthly* our warmest and most sincere greetings. For the British people and particularly for the British working class these 45 years of *Labour Monthly* mark a long process of hard struggle for their well being, to open the road that will lead them to a new and better life, to strengthen the struggle for socialism. We know that this anniversary will serve to strengthen the ties which unite you with the working class and to reaffirm your unshakeable determination to remain true to your international duty. Permit us also in this message to greet R. Palme Dutt who reaches his 70th Birthday. He has played an important part in the history of the workers' struggles.—
Isidoro Malmierca.

FRANCE

Cahiers du Communisme:

The Editorial Board of *Cahiers du Communisme* sends fraternal and warmest birthday greetings to R. Palme Dutt. He is well known in France for his work as a Marxist theoretician on the problems of the liberation movement of the peoples oppressed by colonialism. Many militants of the French Communist Party have been helped in their struggle against their own oppressive imperialism by the articles and books in which he has illustrated so magnificently the great thesis of Marx: 'A

people which oppresses another cannot itself be free.' Palme Dutt has thus contributed to the formation of a generation of Communists who are deeply imbued with the idea of international solidarity with oppressed people, and who are profoundly conscious of the struggle which has to be waged against the common enemy of the peoples of the colonies and the metropolitan countries—imperialism. Today, when colonialism has been torn to shreds by the liberation struggle of the peoples, who rely on the country of socialism and on the working-class movement of his country, Palme Dutt can be proud of the results of the movement, to which he has contributed so much. We congratulate him for this with even greater feelings of friendship on his 70th birthday. His life is inseparable from the work of *Labour Monthly*. We send, therefore, our sister periodical best wishes for great success in the work of spreading ideas of progress, democracy and peace, to which it has devoted itself since its foundation forty-five years ago.—
Léo Figuières.

Démocratie Nouvelle:

It is with great pleasure that *Démocratie Nouvelle* joins with all friends, throughout the world, who will celebrate with you the 45th Anniversary of your magazine and the 70th Birthday of its Editor. We feel all the more close to you, as we have had such close collaboration with you since our magazine was founded nearly twenty years ago. Our readers know the name of Palme Dutt and his writings very well. They hope to have the opportunity on many occasions and for a long time to come of reading them. As for the worthy *Labour Monthly*, we hope that it will continue regularly to bring from

Great Britain the clarity of its Marxist analysis and the encouragement of its enduring effort for enlightenment.—*Pierre Villon.*

La Pensée:

We are happy to send you our heartiest greetings. We have, from the first, appreciated the quality of its information and analysis of international affairs, and respected it as the mouthpiece of the vanguard of the British people. As this anniversary coincides with the 70th Birthday of your editor, R. Palme Dutt, we take the opportunity to pay homage to this great fighter for freedom and against imperialism. His achievements as a journalist, economist and historian, and his contribution to the methodology of history, have ranked him among the prominent Marxists of the age. The editorial board of *La Pensée* feel proud and thankful to count him among its contributors and wish him and *Labour Monthly* many more years of fruitful activity.—*Marcel Cornu.*

GERMANY

Einheit:

We send you hearty greetings from *Einheit*, the theoretical journal of the Socialist Unity Party. In its 45 years, *Labour Monthly* has been a most effective political weapon in the struggle for unity of the British labour movement, in the fight for peace, democracy and socialism in Britain. Thousands of outstanding fighters for the workers' cause have gained their knowledge of scientific socialism and internationalism from you. Today, *Labour Monthly* belongs to the international labour movement and is read in 60 countries. If, on the 45th Anniversary of its foundation, *Labour Monthly* enjoys a high reputation both

nationally and internationally, then this is due not least to the important contributions made by R. Palme Dutt. We wish him many more years of health and active work. We respect R. Palme Dutt as an outstanding internationalist and journalist whose brilliant 'Notes of the Month' are the best example of proletarian-socialist journalism. We wish all the Editorial Board of *Labour Monthly* success in our common struggle for peace and against imperialism and war.—*Editorial Board.*

Wirtschafts Wissenschaft:

We should like to send you greetings and to express our wish for your further success in the propagation of Marxist theory and world outlook. Your journal enjoys the great esteem of many scholars in our Republic and the magazine *Wirtschafts Wissenschaft* hopes that it contributes towards it by the regular publication of the contents of your issues. We also extend our most heartfelt best wishes to your highly respected Editor, R. Palme Dutt, on his 70th birthday, wishing him many years of good health and creative work.—*Editorial Board.*

ISRAEL

Kol Haam:

On this occasion *Kol Haam*, the Israel Communist daily, its editors and readers, join progressive publications all over the world to convey their best wishes. *Labour Monthly* and its long-standing editor have made valuable contributions towards raising the theoretical level of knowledge of working people. We recall with special emphasis the part played by your journal in educating and guiding class-conscious working people in Asia and Africa. May your journal

continue in being a guiding beacon for all those who are striving towards a better future for working people. Our own paper is fighting for a peaceful solution to the Israel-Arab conflict based on mutual recognition of the just national rights of both peoples, Jewish and Arab. It calls on the Government of Israel to support every effort to secure peace in the world and in the Middle East, and especially the initiative to prevent the presence and creation of nuclear weapons in our area. We are doing everything in our power to unify the toiling masses, Jewish and Arab, in the common struggle to establish a united front of the Israeli working class, a broad national-democratic front which will lead Israel on to a new path. Let us sign this letter by wishing you further successes and a growing impact and influence.—*M. Sneh.*

Zo Haderekh (Hebrew) Al Ittibad (Arabic):

The organs of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Israel send you the heartiest fraternal greetings. *Labour Monthly* has a proud, uninterrupted history in the service of the British working class and the international working class movement. In times of peace and war, of stability and crisis, of success and retreat, it has carried high the banner of the proletariat and of proletarian internationalism. It has given concrete guidance to the working people in its day-to-day struggles and shown it the perspective of the socialist future for your country. *Labour Monthly* has, since its foundation, helped the British people to understand the historic significance of the October Revolution and has faithfully worked for friendship with the Soviet Union. It has played a significant part in fruit-

fully influencing workers and intelligentsia in various parts of the world in the spirit of peace, friendship of peoples and social progress. The consistent support of *Labour Monthly* for the national liberation movement of the peoples of Asia and Africa, coming from the geographical centre of British imperialism, has won it many friends and admirers—also in this country. It is also its high standard and theoretical clarity which has given *Labour Monthly* its high standing in Britain and the international working-class movement. And, without deducting from the importance of the many other able contributors, this is mainly due to R. Palme Dutt. His 'Notes of the Month' have become a classical example of principled proletarian journalism. His erudition, his deep understanding of the complex questions on the national and international arena, his selection of the most burning topic of every month, his ability to bring out all aspects of the issue and stress the most important—all this has made his 'Notes' a source of inspiration and a scientific chronicle of our times. All of us who have had the great pleasure to know Dutt personally have drawn inspiration from meeting this man of highest standard and much personal charm. Thus we combine our warm congratulations for your journal with the most sincere greetings to Palme Dutt, for long healthy years, in which he will continue to enrich all of us with his wisdom.—*Meir Vilner.*

NETHERLANDS Politiek en Cultuur:

Fraternal greetings and warm congratulations on the 45th Anniversary of *Labour Monthly* and 70th Birthday of its Editor, Palme Dutt.—*Editorial Board.*

TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION

John Eaton

SOME—and I amongst them—are prepared to assert that we are witnessing the beginnings of a second industrial revolution which will be even more far reaching in its consequences than the first. In *Men, Machines and History* * Sam Lilley wisely says (p. 207) 'only time will show truly the relative merits of various lines of advance' and one cannot yet say with certainty what are the predominant and essential characteristics of the giant transformations in technology and the application of science to industry that are going on all about us. Perhaps it is still debatable whether this is in fact a second technological revolution comparable to the industrial revolution that in the course of the 19th century was to transform human society on a world scale. If one goes further and tries to find some central point, the hub or the core of these changes, so to speak, naturally one must expect to meet more argument and to provoke many doubts. However, it is of value, in man's attempt to understand and act effectively in the world, to make hypotheses from the multiplicity of actual happenings and to let these hypotheses be tested by experience and opposing argument. It is in this spirit that we may usefully contend that the computer is to our contemporary technological revolution what the machine was to the first industrial revolution. Whereas the machine replaced the routine motions of hands engaged in productive activity, the computer replaces the routine processes of thought—any procedures that can be set down with logical precision. Computers can largely replace the human being as a routine-co-ordinator of productive, distributive and clerical processes (and this very generally speaking is what factory and office work—and particularly the drudgery of such work—is). But just as the machine opened up new powers going far beyond the power of the 'hand', so the computer opens a vista of new fields. For example, the inventions of the mathematician and the techniques of the statistician once set down with the logical precision that these disciplines require, can be reproduced faultlessly again and again by the computer. The ration of creative work to repetitive drudgery on the part of man himself can now begin to be changed by more and more eliminating the latter in favour of the former.

If it is in fact true that the computer will be as far reaching in its

**Men, Machines and History*, S. Lilley. Lawrence & Wishart, 352 pp., 45s.

economic effects as was the machine at the turn of the 18th/19th century, then understanding of what it is so as to use it well, for good social ends and to see that the consequences of its use are not harmful—or, as they might well be, socially disastrous—is vital for every leading trade-unionist and Labour politician. We need this understanding to help us find our bearings as science and the new technologies begin to transform the world about us. As a path to such understanding the lucid and vivid descriptions in Chapters 13 and 14 of Sam Lilley's book are to be strongly recommended.

To those who already know Sam Lilley's book published shortly after the war under this same title, the re-appearance of this book will be a great delight. However, although it carries the same title it is a lot more than being the same book. It still is as its sub-title says 'the story of tools and machines in relation to social progress' but so much has happened to our 'tools and machines' and the techniques that they imply, that to tell of what has happened in these last twenty years requires almost a new volume. To Part I which records the development of tools and machines in ancient and medieval times (86 pages) and Part II which covers the span of the industrial revolution from its first beginnings up to 1945 (120 pages) there has now been added a Part III (130 pages) which is entirely new and deals with the momentous technological developments since the end of the second world war.

After reading the concluding chapters of *Men, Machines and History*, one senses that the scale and profundity of contemporary technological change is quite unparalleled in all past history and one cannot but ask 'What does this mean for human society?' The book itself sketches in something of the economic events accompanying technological change in the past and today, but essentially this is a descriptive book telling the story of the tools themselves. This is of course crucial raw material in the application of a materialist approach to history—and it is from this standpoint that Sam Lilley writes.

But there are today also many other people—and not only Marxists—who recognise that scientific and technological change must necessarily have a most powerful impact on human society, and more than ever there is a need and scope for debate about how it has this impact and how to control it and make it serve human needs. These are difficult questions of considerable theoretical complexity and many will be stimulated by this book to probe further into the philosophical and economic implications of technical change. It is

for this reason that I would strongly recommend as parallel reading to *Men, Machines and History* the first three chapters of Oskar Lange's *Political Economy, Vol. I* (published in 1963 by Pergamon Press). This is a magnificent work of high scientific and social importance (and not yet as well known as it should be). Its opening chapters deal in particular with the relationship between changes in productive forces and social change and combine a deep understanding of Marxist theory with a wide knowledge of contemporary trends in scientific thinking. The combination of these two books constitutes a powerful instrument to help the Socialist movement shape a good future for human society.

BOOK REVIEWS

ROSA LUXEMBURG'S LEGACY

Rosa Luxemburg

J. P. Nettl

Oxford University Press, 2 vols., 984 pp., £6 6s.

MARXIST DOCUMENTATION owes a debt to J. P. Nettl, irrespective of all the maddening faults of the book, for this most elaborate research into the life of Rosa Luxemburg. Hitherto we have had to depend, apart from the voluminous array of her books and pamphlets published during her lifetime and subsequently, and her letters published after her death, on the well-known biography by Paul Frölich published in 1939 (English translation issued by the Left Book Club in 1940). The present study is far more elaborate and complete in documentation, based on the fullest use of original sources, Polish, German and Russian.

Unfortunately the book is marred by the subjective interpolations of the author to air his own far from profound wisdom on every issue raised, and to insert ceaseless polemical references to subsequent controversies in the international communist movement and with a general sneering tone to all modern communist spokesmen, so that the exhausted reader has painfully to disentangle the real narrative from the petty personality of the author.

Rosa Luxemburg belongs to the heroic generation of international revolutionary socialist fighters of the pre-1914 Second International, of the first world war and the beginning of the world socialist revolution. She fought in the forefront of the Marxist Left against the revisionism of Bernstein and others from the end of the nineteenth century onwards. On behalf of her tiny Polish Social Democratic Party she fought against the chauvinist distortion of socialism by Pilsudski and the leadership of the Polish Socialist Party. In the German Social Democratic Party she fought alongside Bebel and Kautsky against the increasing domination of right-wing parliamentary reformism and trade union economism.

She was among the first to respond to the Russian Revolution of 1905 and proclaim its significance for the whole European working class movement, and in the light of this experience she carried forward her battle for direct mass activity and the mass strike. Jointly with Lenin she drafted and sponsored the famous Lenin-Luxemburg formula, adopted at the Congresses of Strasbourg in 1907 and Copenhagen in 1910, and reaffirmed at the Basle Congress in 1912, which defined precisely the revolutionary tasks of the international working class movement in the event of the outbreak of the impending European war, and which defeated the empty revolutionary phrasemaking of the British Labour Party and French Socialist Party about the 'general strike against war'*.

She fought heroically against the first world war, and against the betrayal of international socialism by the leadership of German social-democracy and right-wing social democracy in all countries. Jointly with Karl Liebknecht, Leo Jogisches and Franz Mehring, she founded the Spartacus League to carry forward the struggle. When the German revolution brought the release of Karl Liebknecht and herself from prison towards the end of 1918, they founded the German Communist Party and took part in its first congress in December 1918. In January 1919, they were brutally murdered by military thugs employed by the Social Democratic Minister of Defence Noske.

The example of this dauntless and tireless fighting revolutionary record and final martyrdom is the immortal legacy of Rosa Luxemburg to all socialists and communists today. Bound up with this, though less widely familiar today, is the legacy of her polemical writings, speeches, pamphlets and books, which in their time played a great part in the international advance of the left. Her *Social Reform or Revolution* (1899) and her *The Mass Strike, the Party and the Trade Unions* were valued handbooks of the left. The fame of her *Junius Letters* during the war reached us, even though the texts were more difficult to come by at the time. Her would-be magnum opus *The Accumulation of Capital* (1913) was less successful, since she was not at her strongest as a theorist, despite her ambitions in that

* The 'historian' A. J. P. Taylor recently declared, in his introduction to that farrago of confusion about the peace movement entitled 'When the Saints Came Marching in':

The Second Socialist International, founded in 1889, laid down that war was caused by capitalism. The workers should certainly take part in class war. But in the case of war between capitalist states, they should stop it by means of a general strike. The International proceeded to organise this General Strike against war. In 1914 it failed to do so. (A. J. P. Taylor, *TV Times*, May 6, 1966.)

This exceeds even Professor Taylor's familiar record for elementary historical howlers. At the last full Congress of the Second International at Copenhagen in 1910 an amendment to the resolution on war was moved by Keir Hardie for the British Labour Party and the ILP, and Vaillant for the French Socialist Party, advocating that 'among the means to be used in order to prevent and hinder war the Congress considers as particularly effective the General Strike'. This amendment was defeated by 119 votes to 58. The policy adopted by the Second International at its successive Congresses in 1907, 1910 and the Special Congress of 1912, for the revolutionary socialist struggle against war was the Lenin-Luxemburg formula, laying down the duty of all socialists, in the event of the outbreak of the threatening European war, 'to intervene promptly to bring it to an end, and to strive with all their energies to utilise the economic and political crisis brought about by the war in order to stir up politically the masses of the people and hasten the downfall of capitalist class rule'.

When the test of war came in 1914, it was precisely the advocates of empty phrasemaking about 'the General Strike against war', especially Gustav Hervé in France, the French Socialist Party leaders and the British Labour Party leaders who followed an extreme chauvinist line, while Lenin and Luxemburg carried out the line of the International.

direction. Her strength lay in her impassioned revolutionary consciousness; her single-minded devotion to the supreme goal; her blazing fury against all official pretence and humbug and defeatism; her incisive and merciless polemical power in controversy; and her closeness at all times to the mass movement and mass feeling. She had a mordant wit, as when she once remarked casually to Bebel à propos of a particular controversy that 'she and Klara Zetkin were the only two women in German Social-Democracy'.

At the same time there is a second legacy of Rosa Luxemburg, which might be regarded as negative, since it turns on basic theoretical and tactical errors on certain major issues, on which she came into conflict with Lenin and Bolshevism, and on which historical experience has long since proved the erroneous character of her formulations, but which remains in fact a legacy of permanent educational value because of the far-reaching significance of those errors. For the errors in question were no commonplace errors of reformism or confusions of leftism. They expressed with classic clarity precisely those misconceptions of Marxism which were most characteristic of many of the schools of pre-1914 West European Marxism—especially familiar in Britain and the United States—and which still turn up in a variety of forms today. These misconceptions still provide the favourite target of all the professorial critics and refuters of Marxism, who do not realise that they are firing at Aunt Sallys provided by ancient vulgarised distortions of the teachings of Marx.

Three major issues are involved in the very wide field of these controversies—all three of cardinal importance equally today as then.

The first is the economic theory of capitalist accumulation and reproduction. Marx in the second volume of *Capital* worked out with extreme care the complexities of the accumulation and reproduction of capital on an expanded scale. Rosa Luxemburg, disregarding Marx's indications, sought in her *Accumulation of Capital* (1913) to produce her original theory, and in practice fell into the trap, beneath all the elaborate dressing of Marxist formulas and mathematical calculations, of repeating the vulgar fallacies of under-consumptionism. Since the drive of capital is by the law of its being to ever extending accumulation and to ever extending expansion and search for profit, and since the limitation of wages (high or low) is the essential condition for profit, this contradiction not only gives rise to the cyclical crises described by Marx, but also results, according to the Luxemburg theory, ultimately in an absolute, permanent and finally insoluble economic contradiction. Capitalism requires, according to the Luxemburg theory, in order to operate and expand, in face of the limitation of wages unable to provide sufficient purchasing power for an adequate market, 'third persons' or non-capitalist producers to whom to sell the ever increasing volume of goods poured out by capitalist production. These 'third persons' have been provided in the modern epoch by the pre-capitalist economies of Asia and Africa. Hence the drive to imperialist expansion in the hunt for markets and extended spheres of investment. But once the whole world is thus opened up to capitalist exploitation, and these countries themselves develop capitalist production, this outlet will no longer exist, and capitalism will be faced with a final insoluble economic contradiction leading to its downfall.

This type of presentation was long all too familiar in the old type of Anglo-American popularisations of Marxism, especially in propaganda, as also to some extent in other Western countries. Readers may recall Jack London's *Iron*

Heel, where the hero holds the dinner table of assembled dignitaries and financiers spellbound as he graphically paints the picture of the given factory pouring out its ever expanding volume of products to ever extending markets, and reaching out to country after country until these too are all saturated and begin to turn out the same products.* Indeed, this illusory simplification of the contradictions of capitalism found a new currency with the crisis of 1931, when serious Marxists had quite a job to clarify the confusions of wide circles on the left who saw in 1931 what they believed to be the 'final crisis' of capitalism. Even as late as 1939 in his biography of Rosa Luxemburg her devoted admirer, Paul Frölich, in his laudatory account of her economic theories, could claim with regard to the picture of 'steadily increasing volumes of unsaleable commodities' and 'a steadily increasing reserve army of unemployed workers' that 'this is exactly true of present-day capitalist society'. Similarly Nettl, while admitting that Marxist theorists have exposed her economic confusions (Lenin wrote in March 1913, immediately after reading her book: 'She's made a shocking mess of it'), boasts that 'professional bourgeois economists . . . have rediscovered the prophetic quality in her line of economic inquiry'.

Marx's analysis of expanded reproduction of capital showed how, on the basis of the continuous technological development which it stimulates, there is no theoretical economic impossibility of the indefinite expanded reproduction of capital and expansion of production, despite irregularities through the ups and downs of cyclical crises, although the deeper social and economic contradictions would increase. The downfall of capitalism would come, not through some hypothetical future automatic economic collapse, but through the political action of men and women, acting in the common struggle against the conditions engendered by the contradictions, and advancing to the conscious aim to end the system of class domination. Present-day professional anti-Marxist economists, who proclaim their marvelling wonder at the expansion of capitalist production since 1945 and see in all that is happening the supposed refutation of 'Marxist' predictions, are unaware that they are only exploding obsolete caricatures of Marxism, long ago exposed by Marxists, and would do better to study what Marx really wrote.

Two things must also be allowed in favour of Rosa Luxemburg in her work in this sphere, where she lost her way in pure economic theory. She was never an advocate of passively awaiting a supposed future inevitable automatic economic collapse of capitalism. She was the most ardent advocate of determined political action to end capitalism. And her instinct was absolutely correct in leading her to emphasise the importance of imperialist expansion in modern capitalism, even though she was not able to come near to the clarity and profundity of Lenin's analysis of the real characteristics of imperialism as the latest stage of capitalism.

Her second classic error is closely bound up with the first. Although she saw

* "I have demonstrated to you mathematically the inevitable breakdown of the capitalist system. When every country stands with an unconsumed and unsaleable surplus on its hands, the capitalist system will break down under the terrific structure of profits that it itself has reared." (Jack London, *The Iron Heel*, ch. ix, 'The Mathematics of a Dream'.)

This repetition of a fallacy of the old Anglo-American vulgarisation of Marxism should not put off modern readers from this magnificent revolutionary novel of socialism, with its pre-vision of fascism.

the importance of imperialist expansion and exploitation in the modern era of capitalism, she never linked this with the national liberation struggle of the peoples oppressed by imperialism. Nettl correctly states that she 'had no vision of eventual colonial independence in a capitalist world . . . she did not look for any revolutionary potential in the exploitation of colonial peoples'. She took a negative attitude to the demand for national self-determination and the fight for national liberation, and counterposed it to the working class struggle and socialism. Lenin entered into very sharp controversy with her on this key issue.

Here again we can recognise the familiar traditional outlook of the West European labour movement, including, not only the right-wing supporters of imperialism, but also many on the left professing to represent advanced socialist conceptions and to dismiss national claims as obsolete nineteenth century bourgeois-liberal ideas. It is only necessary to recall how the role of Connolly, perhaps the most brilliant champion and gifted practical interpreter of Marxism in these islands during this era, in the leadership of the Easter Rising half a century ago, met with blank incomprehension and amazement from the majority of the labour movement, the ILP and many socialists that he should have sacrificed his life for a cause so unconnected, in their view, with socialism.

Today, when the inter-linked advance of socialism and national liberation is the manifest governing feature of the modern world, the error of Rosa Luxemburg in her negative attitude to the demand for national self-determination is clear to all. But it is necessary to remember that she entered the movement from the conditions of Poland, where the nationalism of the dominant leadership was distorting the advance of socialist consciousness, and this was her first battleground. Nor did she absolutely rule out sometimes the progressive significance of the demand for national self-determination, as in her support of the demand in the case of the Balkan peoples whose national struggle was hastening the dissolution of the Turkish Empire. But in general she laid down the proposition that 'Social-Democracy, which has based its entire policy on the scientific method of historical materialism and the class war, cannot make exceptions in the case of nationality'. This trend was of course general in the old Second International. It required the remarkable insight of genius of Marx in the nineteenth century, in his linking of the future of the English working class with Irish liberation, and of Lenin on the broad scale of the imperialist era in the twentieth century, to see the alliance of the working class in the imperialist countries and the national liberation struggle of the peoples in the countries oppressed by imperialism as the key to the victory of socialism.

The third classic error of Rosa Luxemburg was the most significant for our day and the most serious. This was on the question of the party: that is, the necessity for an independent Marxist political party of the working class, breaking with anti-Marxist trends, even at the same time as fighting for the unity of the working class in action; rejection of the conception of a false 'unity' of the party as a medley of all trends without clarity, and therefore in practice subject to the right-wing, as a substitute for a Marxist political party; and in organisation the necessity of the principles of democratic centralism, that is, the combination of the centralisation of leadership in action and strict discipline with the democratic election and responsibility of the leadership at every level to the membership. On all these key questions Luxemburg came into conflict with Lenin and Bolshevism. On the Bureau of the Second International she drew up the resolution for the unification of the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks, and she blamed

the intransigence of Lenin and the Bolsheviks for the split in Russian Social-Democracy. In Germany she upheld the unity of the model German Social-Democratic Party, which eventually so hampered the left in the name of discipline that, when the betrayal of August 1914 came, even Karl Liebknecht was not ready at first to break that discipline by voting in the Reichstag against the war credits, and the first such opposition vote, laying the foundation for the Spartacus League, the Independents and the Communist Party, came in December 1914. She expressed from prison (on the basis of incomplete information) various criticisms of particular actions of the first phase of the Bolshevik revolution, such as the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, the peace with German imperialism, the institution of Red Terror to crush the counter-revolution, and the establishment of the security organs under Dzerzhinski. She counterposed the free mass action of the working class to the leading role of the party, and thus came close to the theories of spontaneity, seeing in the party, not the indispensable weapon of the working class for the fulfilment of its political role and power, but as a power set up over the working class. This same conception found practical political expression in the 'Soviets Without the Communist Party' slogan of the counter-revolutionary Kronstadt rising.

Naturally these 'libertarian' confusions of Rosa Luxemburg have been seized on and continue to be used with delight by all enemies of communism. Here also, as in the case of Poland and national self-determination, her conceptions were reflecting her battle in the German Social Democratic-Party on behalf of the rank and file and independent working class action against the more and more entrenched right-wing bureaucratic leadership, and she transposed her generalisations from these German conditions to the very different Russian situation. But after her release from prison, and with the beginning of the German revolution, she very quickly began to correct her errors from direct experience, even within the few weeks left to her. She acknowledged her mistake on the question of the Constituent Assembly, and she fought with fiery eloquence against the slogan of 'Constituent Assembly' proclaimed by right-wing Social Democracy and all the embattled reaction against the German Workers' and Soldiers' Councils which had been the temporarily victorious instrument of the revolution. On the question of the necessity of separating the Marxist Left in German Social-Democracy to form an independent party, on which she had previously opposed Lenin, she took the lead in founding the German Communist Party, even without waiting to win first the majority in the larger Independent Socialist Party. On her idealist 'libertarian' conceptions of confronting embattled reaction with the high principles of pure democracy renouncing security organs, history supplied the grim comment when she and Karl Liebknecht and Leo Jogisches and others of the most outstanding leaders of the German working class were murdered at the very beginning of the revolution before the newly founded Communist Party had had time to find its feet.

Rosa Luxemburg's greatness was not primarily as a theorist. She was an immortal heroic revolutionary fighter and leader whose record and example has inspired and will continue to inspire countless millions of fighters for socialism. Lenin summed up the verdict in his famous judgement of 1922:

An eagle can sometimes fly lower than a chicken, but a chicken can never rise to the same heights as an eagle. Rosa Luxemburg was mistaken over the question of Polish independence. She was mistaken in 1903 in her evaluation of Menshevism; she was mistaken in her theory of the accumulation of capital;

she was mistaken when, with Plekhanov, Vandervelde, Kautsky and others she stood for the unification of the Bolsheviks with the Mensheviks in July 1914. She was mistaken in her writings from prison in 1918 (although after leaving prison she largely corrected her mistakes at the end of 1918 and at the beginning of 1919). But in spite of these mistakes she was and is an eagle, and not only will she be dear to the memory of Communists in the whole world, but her biography and the *complete* edition of her works . . . will be a very useful lesson in the education of many generations of Communists.

(Lenin in February 1922, published in *Pravda*, April 16, 1924.)

All the experience of these subsequent decades has confirmed this verdict. R.P.D.

Parliament and Mumbo-Jumbo

Emrys Hughes MP

George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 210 pp., 30s. PARLIAMENT is in a sorry state! An old-established assembly, with great but no longer deserved prestige, it still purports to be the source and basis of power in the state, whilst it is in truth but part of the machinery by which a finance-capitalist ruling-class of exceptional subtlety controls the country in its own interests and not those of the electors. Two results follow. The first, that much of its apparatus has to be twisted to serve its rulers' purpose and the second, that there is no real function for most members of parliament and much time and energy are wasted in shadow boxing. Among the first results is the apparent vesting of almost absolute powers in the Prime Minister (including that of appointing his colleagues) and the absence of free voting by MPs on matters of policy—the last serious political decision by the exercise of MPs' judgments dates back to 1940. This all makes it simple for the decisions of the rulers to be carried into effect. Among the second results are that there is no work of importance for back-bench MPs to do, and little reality in any important debate since everyone knows in advance which way it will be decided. So silly, indeed, has the performance become that, in long arguments as to whether the govern-

ment will allow, say, four days rather than five for one of these 'pre-decided' debates, the opposition asserts that if it is allowed five days to advance arguments which will not be accepted, we are still a 'democracy', whereas if it only has four we shall be a police state. (And it does not matter for this purpose which party is in opposition.) It also becomes a point of honour for the opposition to waste time to hinder government business.

Mr. Emrys Hughes, a by no means orthodox Labour MP, has written this book about the possibility of reforming Parliament. It is lively and entertaining.

Mr. Hughes recognises that: 'Parliament preserves the pretence that we are a democracy and not a plutocratic dictatorship. As long as a government takes its instructions from the City, the banks, big business, the Property Owners' Federation and the Federation of British Industries, what need is there for them to bother about modernising Parliament?' But he offers little more by way of remedy than such surface scratchings as the taking of the Finance Bill in Committee, and the establishment of standing committees with wider powers. And he devotes too much time to denouncing 'Mumbo-Jumbo'. It is as insidious as royalist propaganda, but it is not as important as he makes it out to be.

D. N. PRITT.

YOUNG AND WISE

ANYONE attending, or hearing reports of, the powerful 'Hands Off Vietnam' rally in London in July, must have been impressed and heartened by the presence of so many militant young people of varying shades of political opinion voicing their opposition to aggression with considerable feeling. Their vigorous activity has helped to raise the whole movement for peace to a new level. This has been particularly evident to those of us selling *LMs* at demonstrations and protest meetings, where our journal is increasingly greeted as a necessary ally in making the true facts about the horrible politics of wars and the people who start them.

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